

neighbouring countries. Political leadership in all the countries with the exception of Pakistan have also duly reciprocated in this regard. Besides the ongoing diplomatic and other steps, high level visits have been undertaken to provide further impetus. Details are as under:

#### ***Nepal***

Commerce Secretary visited Kathmandu in July. 50% material and labour content requirement has been removed for duty free imports of products of Nepalese manufacture into India. The High Level Task Force met in New Delhi on 09 August which reviewed and expressed happiness over the good progress registered in implementation of Indian aid projects in Nepal. Nepalese Foreign Minister, Dr. Lohani visited Delhi during 12-14 August when all aspects of bilateral relations were discussed in a warm and friendly atmosphere which characterize the close and cordial relations between the two countries.

#### ***Bhutan***

EAM visited Bhutan during 10-12 August and a Bhutanese delegation led by their Planning Minister visited New Delhi from 26 August-2 September when all aspects of bilateral relations were reviewed and a new direction for economic cooperation during next five years has been outlined.

#### ***Bangladesh***

Foreign Secretaries from both countries have exchanged visits. External Affairs Minister is visiting Dhaka during 6-9 September. All pending issues are under discussion, including the water sharing and repatriation of Chakma refugee issues.

#### ***Sri Lanka***

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister visited New Delhi in June and relations with that country are progressing well.

#### ***Pakistan***

Despite the initial positive message of felicitation from Prime Minister of Pakistan, she has not responded to our Prime Minister's reply in which resumption of Foreign Secretary level talks for wide ranging and comprehensive dialogue had been proposed. However, Government have taken several unilateral steps to promote greater interaction and people to people contacts with Pakistan.

#### **Emission Norms**

\*518. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the automobile manufacturers in the country on their own request, were granted in 1993 three

years relaxation period, so that they could develop the required technology to adhere to the emission norms;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the said three years exemption period has since expired;

(d) whether the automobile manufacturers have since complied with the emission norms; and

(e) if not, the action proposed to be taken against them for not complying with the same?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) to (e) The indicative emission norms for different categories of vehicles to be effective from 1.4.1996 were notified on 15.9.1993. Certain amendments were proposed to make the norms more strict and a draft of the amendments was notified on 5.6.1995 and subsequently the final notification was issued on 29.3.1996 to make the new emission norms effective from 1.4.1996. Every motor vehicle manufactured after 1.4.1996 has to comply with the new emission standards. No vehicle can be registered if it is not meeting these emission norms. No relaxation has been given by this Ministry in this regard.

#### **Productivity-Linked Reward to Port Employees**

\*519. SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a new scheme to provide productivity-linked reward scheme for the port and dock employees was pending with the Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps taken to approve that scheme;

(d) the details of the benefits likely to be given to the port and dock employees under the scheme; and

(e) whether it is applicable to all major and minor ports?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) to (d) A new Productivity Linked Reward (P.L.R.) Scheme covering all the officers, employees and workers in the major Port Trusts and Dock Labour Boards for a period of 3 years from the year 1994-95 has since been approved by the Government. The salary/wage ceiling for eligibility for payment of P.L.R. has been removed in this scheme. Payment of P.L.R. at the rates of 18.94% and 19.6% of the annual salary/wage (assuming salary/wage as Rs. 2500 p.m. for calculation where it exceeds Rs. 2500 p.m.) for the accounting years 1994-95 and 1995-96 respectively has been allowed.

(e) New P.L.R. scheme is applicable only for Major Port Trusts and Dock Labour Boards.

[Translation]

#### Thalassemia Patients

\*520. SHRI HANSRAJ AHIR : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to provide any special financial assistance to Thalassemia patients;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government provide financial assistance and incentives to those institutions, which give help to such patients; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to check the increasing number of Thalassemia patients, and eradication of this disease in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) and (b) Although no direct financial assistance is provided, exemption from Customs Duty has been extended on the import of Desferal injections and infusion pump. The marketing of an oral iron chelator Deferiprone for use under strict medical supervision has also been recently allowed which is less expensive and reported to have better level of patient's compliance.

(c) and (d) The mainstay of treatment of this genetic disorder is repeated blood transfusion, followed by iron chelation on continued basis. Blood Banks are being modernised with a view to improve availability of quality blood.

Curative treatment for Thalassemia is through Bone marrow transplantation. The Indian Council of Medical Research, supports an Advance Research Programme at Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore, for curative treatment for Thalassemia.

The ultimate aim is to prevent birth of afflicted children, for which genetic counselling and pre-natal diagnosis during pregnancy is available at a few centres in the country. The I.C.M.R., has initiated a multicentric study for assessing the feasibility of introducing ante-natal diagnosis in the National Family Welfare Programme.

[English]

#### Admission in Nursing Homes

4638. SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the amount of Basic pay is written on the CGHS card alongwith photos of the family members of a retired Government servant;

(b) if so, whether it is in the knowledge of the Government that only the higher Basic pay contributors are given chances to get accommodation in Nursing Home as and when required at the time of admission, particularly in the RML Hospital;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the retired persons particularly whose basic pension is above Rs. 4,000/- is given admission in the Nursing Home; and

(d) if so, whether Government would like to give a serious thought and consider every case without considering basic pensions while giving admissions in the Nursing Homes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) As per criteria laid down the serving Central Government employees become eligible for Nursing Home facility if their basic pay is Rs. 2501/- or above at the time of admission to the Dr. RML Hospital. In case of pensioners, if their basic pension is Rs. 2501/- or above they too are entitled to Nursing Home Facility. However, pensioners drawing basic pension less than Rs. 2501/- but were drawing basic pay of more than Rs. 2501/- at the time of retirement can also avail of the Nursing Home Facility provided they opt for CGHS Pension Card on the basis of the last pay drawn.

(d) In view of (b) & (c) above, there is no such proposal under consideration for the time being.

#### Women Pills Users Facing Tumour Risk

4639. SHRI ANAND RATNA MAURYA : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item that appeared in 'The Times of India' dated June 25, 1996 under caption "Women pill-users face tumour risk";

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that while advertising for oral contraceptive for ladies it was very strongly and clearly recommended by doctors that use of such oral contraceptive pills does not have side-effect and these could be taken safely;

(c) the reasons why innocent people were made to believe for taking such prescriptions by the doctors;

(d) whether the Government propose to take steps to provide medical aid to the victims where needed; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALIM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) Yes, Sir.